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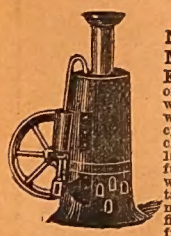
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 309.] FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 1, 1894. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BAKER'S NOVELTIES.



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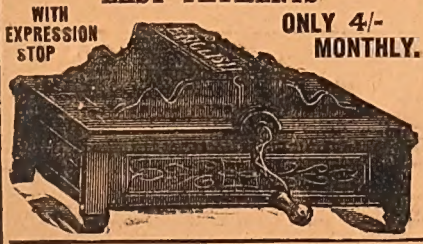

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SHORT STORIES.

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 309.] *FOR THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 1, 1894.* [PRICE ONE PENNY.

A Soldier's Honour

A COMPANY of soldiers was drilling on the parade-ground, and some officers had gathered on the captain's porch watching them. Fort Harker was far out on the plains, so far that the blue peaks of the Rockies could be discerned, and it was a common halting-place for emigrants, outward or homeward bound.

Hence it caused no surprise when a white-topped "prairie schooner" was seen crawling out of the west. In an hour it was not apparently nearer.

"Pretty well tired out, evidently," said Lieutenant Jayne, watching it through his glass.

Another hour and the travellers had not arrived, but just at twilight the outfit appeared in the barracks yard, a forlorn and dilapidated looking object. A woman sat alone on the front seat guiding the weary horses. Even jolly Corporal Doyle was awed into forgetting his usual joke by her appearance.

"Be you alone, ma'am?" he asked.

"No, he's behind in the waggon," came from the pinched but determined lips of the driver as she stepped to the ground. "My husband was taken ill two days ago. I was alone, but I did the best I could for him. He needs care."

The men who had half expected to lift a corpse from the waggon, were relieved to find it was only an invalid, though his appearance was that of one almost dead.

Thus they came to the fort. For a week the stranger lingered between life and death, and when at last life conquered; it was nearly a month before strength returned sufficiently to allow him to leave his bed. The wife, too, was not well, and the troops saw little of their guests.

Mrs. Culmer, as she gave her name, recovered first; and the husband when he awoke one day in July to a knowledge of his renewed strength, roused also the realisation of a fact which nearly threw him into a relapse.

It came about in this way. There was a wide porch with many hammocks outside the guest's chamber, and his bed being near the window, brought him within hearing of a conversation.

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"So we did our best for three years, Abner, but it could not succeed."

Culmer started. It was his wife's voice, but who was Abner?

"And you left New Mexico when?" He had heard that voice somewhere.

"Three months ago, as soon as spring came. We had raised three crops only to see them baked by the furnace-like south winds, and then at last the baby, too, grew weary of the lonely land of adobe huts and scorching suns. We laid her in a pretty spot near Signal Mountains, and putting all we had into the waggon, started for 'God's country.'

"It seems more like home here, and we will stop now where we can find a way to live. John was taken ill on the journey, and for days I struggled alone, not meeting a soul for forty-eight hours at a time. That is all. It is not much like what we planned when you and I lived by the Maine coast, is it?"

"No, and my own life has been as dissimilar to my ideal. I was to be a minister, you remember?"

"And John an editor."

"Instead I went to West Point, then to a Montana post, and now for two years have been here."

There was a sound as of a woman's sobbing; then the man's voice went on—

"But your fate has been harder than you deserved, Mary. So has John's, and it seems to me I could never have lived under it."

Culmer knew now who was talking. Abner Jayne and he had been rivals for the hand of the brave little woman he had made his wife. He had thought sometimes that Jayne was preferred, but finally himself was chosen—and now they had met so strangely. It was indeed different from what they had planned in the days when all three of them were children in the little fishing-village.

Culmer shut his eyes and stopped his ears with the bed clothing. He lay back upon the pillows and thought. They were talking over the past out there in the hammocks. Was Mary sorry that she had chosen him? Did she wish her lot had been with the handsome (he felt sure that Jayne was good looking) army officer instead of with the broken-down adventurer? It had been a hard life he had led her, but somehow in spite of himself everything had gone wrong.

As he lay there he reviewed it all and cursed himself and his "luck" as he called it, while the low hum of voices from the

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porch almost maddened him. And then a pity for himself followed, and jealousy came in its wake. He vowed vengeance on the more prosperous rival—and then drifted off to sleep.

"I do not understand John," said the lieutenant to Mrs. Culmer a few days later, when the old schoolboy friends had had several reminiscent visits. "He looks at me so strangely, and seems so different from his boyhood days."

"He has been too much troubled and discouraged. I wish he could get something to do here—the Kansas prairies are so beautiful."

The soldiers began to note Culmer's distracted state and to talk of it. He had not talked with his wife about his new trouble, but avoided every mention of the lieutenant.

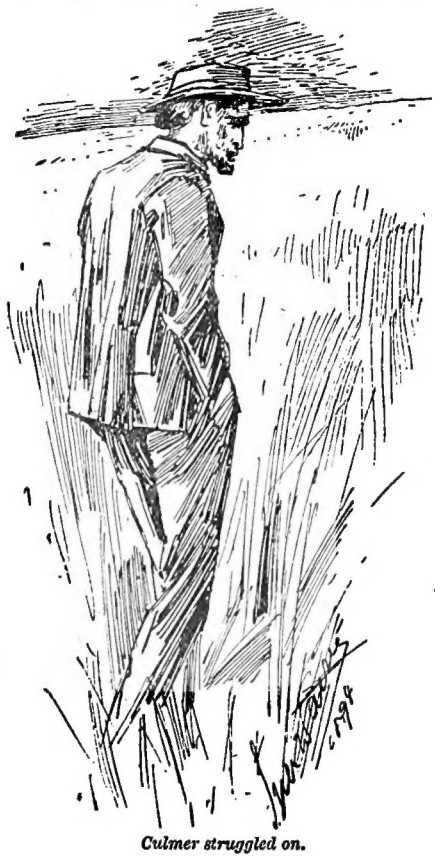
Mrs. Culmer and Jayne were much together, and once, when the officer had been to the prairie city ten miles away, she met him on the parade-ground, and came in with flushed cheeks and a pleased expression. The soldiers had come to call her pretty. Culmer saw the meeting, and that evening his walk over the plain lasted until nearly midnight.

He slept late the next morning, and when he awoke his wife was gone. What was more remarkable, the horses which had been feeding in the stable since the emigrants arrival were gone too, and Lieutenant Jayne had left in the saddle before daylight.

Every man in the garrison pitied Culmer that morning as he went about making inquiries in a dazed kind of way that told more plainly than frantic imprecations how severe was the blow.

Mrs. Culmer had ordered the horses, so said the ostler, just at daybreak, and had driven off alone, though the animals were very restive from their long halt and good feeding. She had gone toward the prairie city where Jayne had been the day before. As for the lieutenant, no one noticed which direction he took.

For an hour Culmer walked up and down the parade-ground. His face had the pallor of death, and his steps were nervous and quick, as one whose brain is throbbing. The summer sun beat down on his wide-brimmed felt hat, but he did not notice it.



Culmer struggled on.

Suddenly he was gone. The few soldiers who were lounging in front of the buildings did not see him depart, and the guard had challenged no one.

It was judged that he had gone towards Fairview, the railway station; but no one was sure of it until noon, when the captain, sweeping the plain with his telescope, made out a figure four miles away.

"Poor fellow!" he murmured, "he will never finish the chase!"

And then he volunteers the information that Jayne had the night before asked for and received his month's vacation furlough.

That settled it, in the soldiers' minds. There was but one explanation of the morning's happenings — an erring wife, a broken-hearted husband, a soldier-lover. Some of the officers who had known Jayne professed to believe him incapable of such a deed, and declared him the soul of honour; but they were in the minority.

The prairie over which Culmer had walked, half staggered, was dry and brown. Though only midsummer, the drought and hot winds had eaten up the sap of the grasses, and they swished against his feet with a hard, crisp sound.

The sky was clear, and the unsoftened Kansas sun had blazed the air into pulsing waves of heat that met his face in burning currents, borne by the racing south wind that came steadily, swiftly, like the blowing of a simoom. Not a house was in sight, for the Government claimed all the land thereabouts as a military reservation, and the fort itself was a distorted figure on the horizon.

Culmer struggled on with bowed head and shambling, weak-kneed steps. He did not see even the meadow larks that struggled fitfully against the wind.

That wind—for three days it had been blowing—rolled up from the south, bearing on its back the *débris* of hundreds of ill-tended fields and ill-kept door yards. In the towns vast clouds swept through the streets and in the homes of toiler and capitalist alike; little ridges of dark, finely pulverised sand marked every crevice in wall or window casing.

The third day of the wind storm a darker cloud than that of dust came rolling out of the southern horizon.

It was smoke.

The flames swept with peculiar strength and apparent pleasure over the Government reservation, and the soldiers of the Seventh remember yet the fight they had that afternoon to protect the buildings of the post.

Culmer was roused to his danger only when the long dancing flame could be distinguished as it devoured the dry grasses. The line was so long that he knew he could not escape on foot and he stood staring at it dumbly. Then he turned and swept the remainder of the horizon, hoping for a way of escape.

Coming towards him from the east was a white-topped waggon. It must have followed a ravine that he did not see it before. Now it was out on the high prairie, and the horses were approaching at a canter. As it came nearer through the film of smoke already filling the atmosphere, he saw that the driver was a woman—and, yes; it was Mary! Culmer was becoming more and more bewildered, and could not speak until his wife's voice called to him.

"Oh, John; quick. Help me unharness the horses; they can never pull a waggon fast enough! We must ride."

Serious as was the situation, he could not resist the temptation to answer with a sneer, "Where is Abner?"

"He is coming, John, and we've been so fortunate—I'll tell you about it—don't you see the fire there—quick, help me!"

She was tugging at the leather harness frantically. The horses alarmed, reared and fretted.

John with desperate recklessness, drew his knife, and slashed trace after trace, strap after strap, and in a moment the animals were free. He was too desperate, too reckless about it, and the nervous woman at the horses' heads was overpowered by their actions and lost her footing. Away the frightened animals went scurrying over the prairie, while the husband and wife looked each other in the eyes blankly.

"John"—it was the woman who spoke—"what have you done?"

The flames were now not a quarter of a mile way.

"Why should I care what I've done with your doings of to-day to think of?"

"My doings?" The blue eyes were very wide.

"Yes, I know you like him better than me, because he wears a uniform and all that—but it won't matter now."

"Do you mean our old friend Abner? Why, John—oh, there he is now."

Tearing up from the ravine in the track the waggon had followed came the lieutenant on his strong army horse. Almost as soon as they had discovered him he was at their side. A motion from Mary's hand towards the flying horses,

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now mere specks on the plain, was sufficient to explain the situation.

With quivering lips he looked the pair in the face. He could mount his horse and escape. He could take one of them. That was all. Which would he do?

"Here John, hold the horse." The lieutenant's voice had a queer husky inflection that made the listeners stare.

There was not an instant to lose. Already the fire was so close that the air scorched their lungs.

"Mary, I have no one dependent on me. Take these things."

The woman did not realise the sacrifice until she had had forced into her hands the pocket-book and letter-case.

"Give them to the captain," he added. "He understands. Now, no stopping."

"Mary, take these things."

He put both strong hands round the woman's waist, and easily lifted her to the horse's back, sweeping her shoulder with his lips as she was carried upward.

"John, jump into the saddle."

The tone was so commanding that the man obeyed. There was a sharp blow on the horse's flank, and the two were borne almost in the teeth of the tide of fire northward. On and on the strong charger raced until the flames were outstripped. The atmosphere grew clear and broad. Black smoking plains stretched off to the right, with flames away to the northward.

"John," sobbed the woman, "did you think——"

She faltered.

"Yes, Mary, I thought it all. But why did you leave to-day?"

"Leave? Abner had secured you a place on the paper at Fairview, and I went there to arrange things, and was going to surprise you. He was to spend his furlough getting us settled."

They rode into the fort at nightfall, and we who carried the wan woman to the guest chamber wondered what experience she had been through since that morning. It was weeks before we knew it all.

A company of soldiers went out in the morning. They found a blackened heap of ruins in the midst of the blacker plain.

These were the iron-work of a waggon, some timbers, and among them a body wrapped in charred canvas.

It was Lieutenant Jayne. He had met death as calmly as he would have done on the field of battle. A small Testament was found in his clothing. In it were two photographs—one was that of a grey-haired woman, his mother; the other every man in the group recognised as that of the emigrant's wife, Mary Culmer.

THE STORY OF A PICTURE

I.

THE artist stood before his picture in the dusk of the evening. The great studio was full of shadows, and the heaped up canvases, the easels, the properties of various kinds loomed indistinctly and mysteriously in the gloom, looking many of them like strange personalities waiting until darkness was fully come to perform some action unbefitting the light.

And the artist stood before the picture in the centre of the cedar wood floor, quite alone, quite immersed in peering contemplation. He had been a so-called successful man all through his life, a favourite of the gods.

He was a noble specimen of manhood, an athlete as well as an artist, an actor in the world's drama of action, not merely a dreamer who imagined, or a thinker who looked on and grew sad. He lived in many ways, not merely in one; and if his great ambition, his untiring genius led him ever upon one road, the road which artists traverse, he often went down the by-path, and took excursions which led him from the toilsome way, at the end of which stood the goal towards which he aimed.

Harold Brand was in a peculiar, terribly strung-up frame of mind. He had just come to the end of a great effort, and he was strongly excited, as the actor is excited after a great scene, or the musician after an ardent performance. He had been striving, as even he had never striven before, and he was not yet calm enough to appraise the result, or know whether his idol was clay or gold.

The picture seemed to him transcendently beautiful as he stood bending forward and gazing at it with the closest attention. He fancied that at last he had almost succeeded in satisfying his own ambition. All his matured knowledge, all his acquired skill, all his shining genius seemed to speak plainly from the canvas, convincing him for the moment of his own greatness, as others had long ago been convinced.

Yes, it was a noble work; and yet it was only the presentment of a woman, who stood in a simple attitude, holding a mirror in her hand and gazing into it with a sad, half wonder-

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ing wholly wistful expression. Only a woman; but how magically painted!

Underneath the picture the artist had scrawled roughly on a bit of cardboard its title, "The Mirror."

There came a tap on the door of the studio. The artist started, and for a moment stood uncertain. He had been so wrapped up in his achievement that he could not realise what had roused him and broken his reverie. He knew he had heard something, but could not at first tell what it was.

But the tap was repeated, and a smile stole into his eyes.

"If she has come!" he thought, and he walked towards the door. His footman stood there with a card. "Mrs. Amarinth," he read on it.

"Ask Mrs. Amarinth to come into the studio," he said, "and bring tea and a lamp. I am not at home to anyone else this afternoon."

The man departed, and Harold stood by the open door with the card in his hand expectantly, until he heard steps in the distance. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him. He hurried to the picture and drew a covering over it, with a hand that trembled slightly.

"She must not see it yet, not till I have told her about it," he said to himself, and then returned as a lady entered.

"I have kept my promise, Mr. Brand," she said, holding out her hand to him in the twilight. "I have come and scattered excuses behind me. I only stayed five mimutes at Lady Endbury's. I don't know what she thought of me, but if we cared what people thought or said about us, in this world of London, we should have a very bad time, shouldn't we? How very dim and religious your light is. Where shall I sit?"

"Will you sit here?" he said, slowly releasing her hand and bringing forward an armchair covered with stamped velvet. "It is not very cold, but I mean to light the fire so that we may have a cosy hour together."

"Do," she said, with a little sigh, leaning back, "I love firelight, and this darkness seems cold. Ah, that is better," as the flames began to flicker and dance, and fly from log to log. "And now tell me why you wanted me so particularly to-day."

He came and stood before her. His handsome face was slightly flushed, and his eyes were glittering with excitement.

"I always want you, I think," he said.

"That is because you haven't got me," she answered. "You have so much—fame, wealth, satisfied ambition—everything a strong man wants, and yet I would not mind wagering that you believe yourself unhappy, that you imagined yourself unsatisfied. Everybody does nowadays. To be restless and dissatisfied is almost as fashionable as to be poor, or to have made one's money in trade."

He sat down on an oak settle near her.

"I think I am happy at this moment, quite happy. Yet, there is one thing would make me happier, and it depends upon you."

She smiled softly.

"And what is that?" she asked, letting her eyes rest upon his.

"I will tell you. But here's tea."

She sipped softly, with her eyes on him.

"You are an adept at piquing a woman's curiosity," she said at last.

"Believe me, Mrs. Amarinth, it is not that. I only wish to put off something that makes me hopeful, yet afraid. I think you understand me a little, very well, I might even say. You are not a worker, but you understand what work can be to the worker, what a mingled delight and terror, what a supreme joy—almost touching love in keenness—or what a sorrow. You know how I have looked on myself as a failure, while the world chooses to think otherwise. You know I have not been happy ever, because I have never succeeded as I wished, done all I have sometimes felt it in me to achieve. I have let you know all this. Have I bored you?"

Her soft lips parted.

"You have paid me the highest compliment a great man can pay a woman who is not great," she breathed.

"No one can pay you compliments," he said. "They can only render you homage. But you have done more than sympathise with my dissatisfaction, you have helped me to kill it, I believe. Your influence has worked a spell in me, and given me, as it were, the management of, the control over, my powers, which sometimes seemed lacking before. I want to show you the result. But first tell me something, will you not?"

"Ask me what it is?"

He bent over her and took her hands, and his were trembling with a keen, nervous emotion that strength of will could no longer entirely control.

"Need I ask you in words?" he said. "There are some things whose bloom is rubbed off so easily, and words are rough things at times. Look up into my face and tell me you understand what I mean."

She lifted her beautiful eyes to his passionate ones slowly. Then musingly she said, "But if I made a mistake it would hurt me. I am only a woman. You must tell me before I can answer you."

"I will tell you then," he answered, and he kissed her.

Her soft lips lingered on his. "That's my answer," she whispered in a sigh. And it was a long while before either of them spoke again.

At last she broke the silence—"I hoped you loved me," she said, with a delicious frankness, "but I never knew it; your mind is a strong box, a safe which it is difficult to prise. I have only tampered with the lock till now."

"I fear there is not much treasure in it. But it is all yours. And while I cannot tell you how much I love you, I can show you in my work. Do you remember the first time I saw you that you said something about mirrors? You said you looked into life as you would look into your mirror, and you saw in it nothing that interested you more than your own reflection. I have painted you looking into the mirror, and I think—I hope—that at last I have done something that will be more than praised, that will be remembered after the summer is over, and the Academy has shut its doors. I would not exhibit it only I want all the world to know how beautiful you are."

The young widow looked at him eagerly till he had finished speaking, then she sprang from her chair.

"And it is here, in the studio?" she said. "Ah! now I understand why you wanted the light. You want me to tell you it is beautiful, and then your happiness will be complete. Show it to me."

"I will."

He strode to the distant table. His heart was beating violently with excitement, and he himself was already eager to see his work again now that a longer time had elapsed since he had finished it. He might have to slightly readjust first impressions. He pulled the table in front of the easel, and then slowly drew the covering from the picture.

Then he stood in silence waiting, not looking at her because he wanted to so much. She said nothing for a while. Not a word escaped her. The silence was so intense that he could hear her breathing.

At last, suddenly, a little hard sound broke from her. It might have been a sob.

"I wonder you can love me at all," she said in a dry voice. "If I am like that, I wonder you can love me."

She turned towards him and saw the expression on his face.

"Mr. Brand—Harold—" she said, and the dryness vanished in a moment, "I have hurt you; but, indeed, indeed, you have hurt me. I am not like that. I am not." She put up her mouth to his. "Kiss me," she whispered. "I am not angry. I do love you. But, oh, Harold, you must not exhibit it! The world may see me, but it must not see—that."

She had gone and the artist stood once more alone in his studio. The fire leaped and crackled upon the hearth, and cast its ruddy glow over the cedar-panelled walls, over the vaulted roof, over the music gallery at the end of the room, over the easel on which the picture stood. After he had bidden Mrs. Amarinth good-bye and kissed her once more in the deserted hall before he himself let her out into the evening air, Harold had turned to the studio and locked the door. He sat down upon the oak settle by the fire and remained for a long time plunged in meditation.

Many emotions swirled round in the whirlpool of his mind.

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His strong deep nature had been utterly taken hold of by Mrs. Amarinth and he had never known exactly why. He loved her as an artist, certainly for her great beauty; but her personality was what attracted him really with a strong magnetic force that made him acknowledge himself more than her lover—her slave. He could see her faults, and they were not few, but one he had never allowed to himself could possibly exist, and this was a frivolity and a lack of depth which, in spite of all her culture, prevented her from really understanding, or in any way properly appreciating, the greatest achievements of art or the noblest beauties of nature.

He had almost deliberately bandaged his eyes and refused to recognise this fact. And now he was suffering from painful doubt, from quenched enthusiam, from a sense of being utterly misunderstood by the one being whom he utterly loved.

He suffered because he could not break the shackles of a love he had felt unworthy. The struggle was intense, but it could only end one way. At length he set down the lamp, bent his head a moment till his lips nearly touched the canvas, then dropped the covering down over it, lifted it from the easel, and placed it against the wall behind some heaped-together failures on which no one ever looked. The soul of the man, the human being, dominated the soul of the artist; the love for the woman conquered the love for the picture.

Silently, in that bitter-sweet moment, Harold Brand renounced his art.

II.

THEY had been married for some years, and many springs had fled away since that spring evening, yet in all that time Harold had never once handled brush or palette. He would fain have locked the studio up and left it finally deserted; but this his wife would not allow. It was an ideal ball room, she said, with its vaulted roof, its smooth floor of dark polished wood, its gallery just made for Coote and Tinney's band, whose valse music floated down deliciously through the elaborate carving of the beautiful balustrade.

"And I think, dear," she would say sometimes to her husband, "that you killed what little love I had with that frightful travesty you made of me. Do you remember it? You called it 'The Mirror.' I am so glad you never showed it to anyone. By the way, what has become of it?"

"I hardly know. It is lying about somewhere," he answered. And then he would abruptly leave the room.

The whole nature of the man seemed to have changed during those years. All his brilliancy and brightness, all his impulsive charm, all his energy, vivacity, and determination had gone. He was as one living and yet dead, cold with a coldness that seemed almost as the grave, instead of warm with the warmth of pulsing young life. His love for a woman had killed him then.

So Brand married a woman for her money, so they said, in order to escape from the trammels and the assiduous labours of art. He buried his genius in a grave of gold, and left it to rot while he lived an aimless life of luxury. And they grew to despise him and to hold him in a measureless contempt. His old loved set of intimates, the few men who had once understood and worshipped him, knew him no more.

Sometimes it seemed to him impossible that he could be wrapped up in a being who had no appreciation of the things which meant most to him, who had no real care for anything except the frivolities of life. He loved her, and was her husband, and yet his whole real self was unknown to her.

Sometimes, when he heard her congratulating herself on her influence over him, and telling people that he lived in the world now, instead of burying himself in art, he could not refrain from smiling bitterly. Her influence over him! What was it? She could make him love her. She could reach his heart and touch it. She could never reach his mind and touch that. Hers for him, meanwhile, at length wholly died. She lived more and more in the world, and ceased to desire to take him with her.

Mrs. Brand had among other distractions taken to gambling heavily.

So long as he was not compromised he let things take their course, and the last scene of the strange comedy of his life was, he knew, fast approaching.

. . . . . .

The artist learned two things almost simultaneously—that his health was failing and that his wife's passion for gambling was leading her farther than was wise. Her fortune had been large originally, but she had almost exhausted it, and had begun to draw heavily upon his. Remonstrances were useless. They seemed to avail perhaps for the moment, but Mrs. Brand continued to play in secret, although, to all appearances, she had yielded to her husband's entreaties or commands and given up the practice that was ruining her.

That his health was failing visibly she never noticed, and he never told her that he was suffering from aneurism of the heart, and that his days were numbered.

She, on the other hand, gave out that she was full of ailments, and finally persuaded an accommodating doctor to order her to Monte Carlo for change. Before she left England the artist won a promise from her that she would not once go to the tables while she was there.

Needless to say, the promise was never kept. She had never meant that it should be. Every day was passed at the tables, with varying luck at first. She even won a good deal, and her excitement grew more intense, more feverish than ever. But the luck changed, and the usual thing happened. She went on until she was terribly involved, till she had gambled away every farthing she had in the world. She was at last reduced to telegraphing to her husband for the means of getting home. The money was sent without a word of comment, and she returned.

It was late in the afternoon when she drove up to the big house in Kensington. She noticed that all the blinds were closely drawn. The servant who met her at the door broke the news that her husband had died in the studio, and had been found there some hours afterwards.

Mrs. Brand was honestly shocked, but she was hardly grieved. It could not make very much difference to her now; and it set her free to gamble with the money which had been his, and which now was hers. And so she played on until nearly everything was gone.

At last destitution stared her in the face. She had paid away all her money to satisfy debts of honour, and her other creditors were clamouring to be satisfied, and threatened to sell her up. Most of the beautiful things in the house were already sold. She resolved now to part with the house itself.

One evening a man, who had been an old friend of her husband's, and who had heard of her disasters, and of the dire straits she was in, called upon her. He had loved Harold, and for the sake of his memory resolved to do what he could to help the woman who had ruined the artist's life. He found her standing in the drawing-room before an easel, that was struck up incongruously in the middle of the floor, looking hopelessly out of place among the surroundings of the room.

After the first greetings had been uttered, Mrs. Brand said abruptly: "I know you are a good judge of art, and I want you to tell me something. I have appealed to you in my difficulties, and you know how terribly hard-up I have managed to get. Now, casting round for some means of making money, it occurred to me that although my husband long before his death entirely gave up painting, his name is still famous, and a new work of his might fetch a good price in the market."

"A new work!" exclaimed her visitor. "Has he left one behind him?"

"Well, it can hardly be called new. It was painted before we were married, and it was never exhibited, at my request. I will tell you exactly how it was. Before he proposed to me he painted me. I gave him no sittings. I never knew what he was doing till it was finished. On the evening he proposed to me he showed me the finished picture—I believe he thought it by far his best work—his masterpiece—but it did not do me justice. I told him so frankly. I begged him not to exhibit it. Do you know I often think it was my disapprobation which led him to forsake art? He never took a brush in his hand again. He loved me very much, and he was very proud. Now it occurs to me that I might sell this picture. It was painted years ago. I have altered. Nobody will find out it was

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intended for me, probably, and even if they do, I cannot help it. I must have money."

"May I look at it?" he said, and he stood before it.

She lifted the covering, and he gazed silently, holding his breath.

And as he gazed his eyes filled with tears, and he trembled. He, too, was a fine artist, and the dead man had once been his dearest friend. He had misunderstood him. He had been alienated from him. He had thought him unworthy.

Now he understood all the tragedy of his life, all the wasted genius, all the agony the proud, passionate, loving nature must have endured. And she would sell the picture.

He could not speak. He dared not trust himself to say one word.

At last she said, "Is it any good?"

He walked to the window, and looked out into the gathering dusk Then in a hoarse, low voice, he said abruptly: "Will you take two thousand pounds for it?"

She gave a cry of delight

"Two thousand pounds for that!" she exclaimed.

"I will send a cheque to-night, on condition that I may take it away with me at once."

He could scarcely command his voice.

"Take it by all means," she said. "The servant shall carry it out for you."

"No. I will carry it out myself, with my own hands," he answered. And he lifted it reverently from the easel and bore it away with him to his home.

. . . . . .

And now the world gazes in awe upon that wonderful canvas, which wrecked a life, and worships the memory of the silent, dead artist.

And the woman—she has gambled away the two thousand pounds and forgotten the picture; the picture that did not do her justice!

HOSKIN'S PETS.

"YES," said the journalist, reflectively, "I've been almost everywhere in my time, except in gaol, and I've been in many worse places than a first-class gaol, with all the modern improvements. The fact is, that philanthropic people have gone so far in improving the condition of prisoners, that most of our prisons are rather better than most of our hotels. At any rate, they are less expensive, and the guests are treated with more respect.

"I never could understand the craze that some people have for criminals. For instance, you can read almost any day in the papers of young ladies sending fruit and flowers to murderers. Whenever a man is convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged, the girls begin to shower tributes of flowers into his cell until he can't turn round without upsetting a vase of roses, or a big basin of pansies, and getting his feet wet.

I had a neighbour when I lived in Lewes who was the president of the Society for Ameliorating the Condition of Prisoners, and he was the craziest man on the subject that I ever met. His name was Hoskins—Major John Hoskins—and he was the author of the Hoskins' Bill that attracted so much attention when it was before the House of Commons, though it never became law.

"The Bill provided that every prisoner should have a sitting room as well as a sleeping room, and that it should be furnished with a piano, a banjo, a library, a typewriter, a wine cooler, and a whist table; that the prisoner should be allowed to hold two weekly receptions, to which everybody should be allowed to come, and that he should be taught any branch of study that he might care to take up, books and masters being, of course, supplied free.

"Major Hoskins used to insist that the only thing that made a man go wrong was the lack of kindness, and that the sure way to reform a criminal was to treat him with so much kindness that he would grow ashamed of being wicked, and would fall on everybody's neck and devote the rest of his life to weeping tears of repentance and singing hymns of joy.

"While Major Hoskins patronised all styles of criminals, burglars were his particular pets. According to him, a burglar was more deserving of kindness than other men. 'How would you like it,' he used to say, 'if you had to earn your living by breaking into houses in the middle of the night, instead of sleeping peacefully in your bed? Do you think you would be full of good thoughts after you had been bitten by the watch-dog and fired at by the man of the house, and earned nothing by your labour except a bad cold and the prospect of hydrophobia?

"'There is nothing more brutal than the way in which society treats the burglar, and as long as society refuses to put him in the way of earning an easier and less dangerous living he cannot be blamed if he continues to practise his midnight profession.'

"I must say this for Major Hoskins. He did not confine himself to talk, like many other philanthropists, but he was always trying to carry out his principles. He really meant what he said about burglars, and there isn't the least doubt that he had more sympathy for them than he had for the honest men of his acquaintance.

"When people asked him what he would do if he woke up in the night and found a burglar in the house, and whether or not he would shoot at him, he said he would as soon think of shooting his own wife, and that he would undertake to reform that burglar then and there by kindness alone. Once somebody said to Hoskins that he ought really to let the burglars know his feelings towards them, and Hoskins said he would do it without delay.

"That same day he drew up a beautiful 'Notice to Burglars,' and had it printed in big letters and framed and hung up in the dining-room of his house. It read this way: 'Burglars are respectfully informed that the silver is all plated, and that the proprietor of this house never keeps ready money on hand. Cake and wine will be found in the dining-room cupboard, and burglars are cordially invited to rest and refresh themselves. Please wipe your feet on the mat, and close the window when leaving the house.'

"Major Hoskins took a good deal of pride in that notice. He showed it to every one that called at the house, and said that if other people would follow his example, and treat burglars like Christians and gentlemen, there would soon be an end to burglary, for the burglars would be so touched by the kindness of their treatment that they would abandon the business and become honoured members of society—insurance managers, or bank cashiers, or churchwardens. He didn't say how the reformed burglars were to find employment in banks and insurance offices; but that was a matter of detail, and he

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always preferred to devise large and noble schemes, and leave the working details to other men.

"One morning, Major Hoskins, who was an early riser, went down to the dining-room before breakfast, and was surprised to find that he had been paid a midnight visit by some burglars. Two empty wine bottles stood on the table, and all the cake was eaten, which showed that the burglars had accepted the invitation to refresh themselves. All Hoskins' spoons and forks lay in a heap in the middle of the floor, and every one was twisted or broken so as to be good for nothing. The window had been left open, and the rain had ruined the curtains, and on a dirty piece of paper the burglars had scrawled with a lead pencil the opinion that 'Old Hoskins is the biggest idiot and the bloominest skinflint in the country. You set out whiskey next time, or we will serve you out.'

"Hoskins was not in the least cast down by the rudeness of the burglars. 'Poor fellows,' he said, 'they have been so used to bad treatment that they don't altogether appreciate kindness at first. But they will learn.' So he laid in some new spoons and forks, and added a bottle of whiskey to the wine that he kept in the cupboard for the burglars, and was as confident as ever that the next gang that might break into the house would be melted into tears and repentance, and would call him their best and dearest friend.

"A week or two later Mrs. Hoskins was awakened by a noise in the dining-room, and, after rousing her husband, told him that there were burglars in the house, and that he must get out of the back window and go for the police. He told her that he was sorry to see her manifest such an un-Christian spirit, and he would show her how burglars ought to be treated.

"There was not the least doubt that there were burglars in the house, and they were making a great deal more noise than was strictly consistent with the prospect of rising in their profession, for no able burglar ever makes any unnecessary noise while engaged in business, unless, of course, he falls over a coalscuttle, and then he naturally uses language. Hoskins was sincerely delighted to have the opportunity of meeting his burglarious friends, and he lost no time in dressing and descending to the dining-room.

"He wore his slippers, and the burglars—there were two of them—did not hear him until he was fairly in the room. They were seated at the table, with their feet on the damask table-cloth, and the bottle of whiskey was nearly empty. The Major was much pleased to see that they had not damaged his silver ware, and he was just about to thank them when they saw him. They started up, and one of them caught him by the throat while the other held a pistol to his head, and promised to blow out his brains if he made the slightest noise. Then they tied him hand and foot, gagged him, and laid him on the floor, and then sat down to finish the whiskey.

"Both burglars were partly drunk, which accounted for the unprofessional noise they had been making. They talked in a rather low tone, but Hoskins could hear everything they said, and it was not particularly encouraging to a gagged and bound philanthropist.

"They agreed that he was a fool, and a stingy fool, or else he would have kept money in the house, and would have set out lemons and sugar as well as plain whiskey. They said that any man who treated poor working men in that way wasn't fit to live, and that Hoskins would have to be killed, even if it was not necessary—as it was plainly in this case—to kill him in order to prevent him appearing at any future time as a witness against them. They admitted that the whiskey was not bad of its kind, but they were of the opinion that Hoskins had left it in their way so that they might get drunk and be caught by the police.

"Major Hoskins listened to all this conversation with horror, and the prospect that the drunken rascals would be as good as their word, and kill him before they left the house, was only a little more painful than the conviction that his method, appealing to the better nature of burglars, had failed for the second time.

"When the whiskey was exhausted the men rose up and looked at Hoskins, and a happy thought struck one of them.

"'Thish yer idiot,' he said, 'may not have any money in the house, but he's bound to have some in the bank, and he's going to write us a cheque for a hundred pounds, providing we let him off, and don't kick his brains out this time.'

"The other burglar, who was in that benevolent frame of mind that Irish whiskey and conscious virtue sometimes produce, agreed to the suggestion, and Hoskins was therefore unbound and seated at the table, and told to draw a cheque at once if he had the least regard for his life. As he was gagged he could not explain to the burglars the kind feelings he still had towards them, and the fact that they could not draw the money on the cheque without being captured by the police. So he simply signed the cheque, and groaned to think that the poor burglars were so slow to be reformed in the way that he had hoped they would take.

"When this business was over, the burglars tied Hoskins' wrists again, and then bound him to a chair, Then they set to work to do all the damage they could without making too much noise. They tore the curtains and hacked the piano with knives, and poured a jug of golden syrup over the carpet. Then they plastered Major Hoskins' face with raspberry jam, and emptied a sack of flour all over his head, and went away, telling him that if he ever ventured again to trifle with the feelings of poor but self-respecting men they would put him to death by slow tortures.

"Hoskins sat in the chair for a couple of hours, till his wife timidly crept downstairs and released him. It took him a good hour to get the jam and the flour out of his hair and whiskers, and as Mrs. Hoskins said that he was in no state to enter a decent bedroom, and made him wash at the tap in the back kitchen, he found it a rather cold operation.

"Perhaps it was the remarks that Mrs. Hoskins addressed to him during the operation that irritated the Major, for she intimated very plainly that he was no better than a professional idiot, and when a man's hair is stuck together with jam remarks of this sort from the wife of his bosom seem to be lacking in tenderness.

"However that may be, Major Hoskins had no sooner got himself into what his wife condescended to call a state of comparative decency, than he took down his 'Notice to Burglars' and tore it into a thousand pieces.

"That day he had an electric burglar alarm put into his house, he bought the fiercest dog that he could find, and he stopped the payment of the cheque, which, however, was never presented.

"He continued to be the President of the Society for Ameliorating the Condition of Prisoners, but he steadily refused to better the lot of a single prisoner convicted of burglary; and while he was always a lunatic in regard to other criminals, he openly maintained that a burglar was the worst of men, and that kindness was utterly thrown away upon him.

"He never had any more burglars in his house, though the dog now and then destroyed masculine clothing, when some stranger to that part of the country ventured into Hoskins' premises at night. Hoskins was very fond of the animal, which was quite right; but his practice of leaving a bottle of whiskey, with an ounce of strychnine in it, on the dining-room table every night, in case a burglar should succeed in getting into the house, was, in my opinion, going a little too far. But there is no man who is more severe than a philanthropist who has been turned sour."

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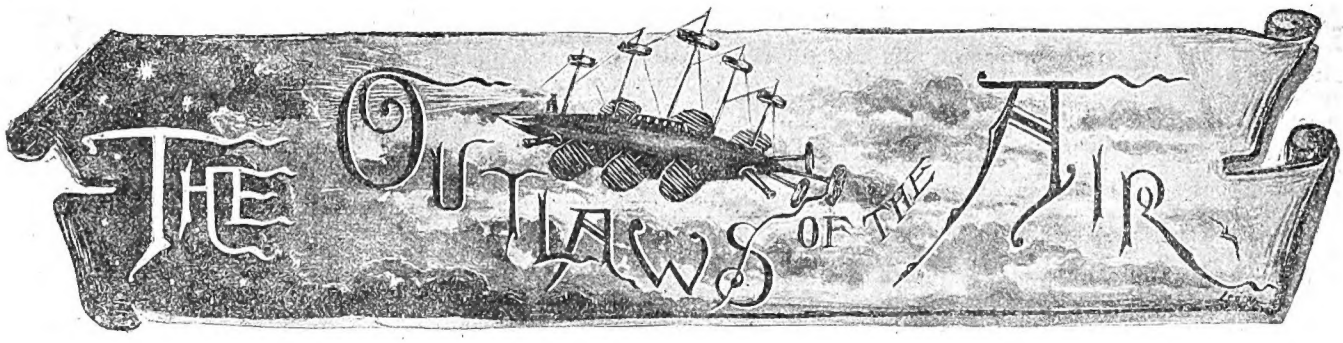

By GEORGE GRIFFITH,

Author of "The Angel of the Revolution," "The Syren of the Skies," &c.

SUMMARY.

MAX RENAULT—leading spirit of Anarchist Autonomie Group No. 7, who has joined the Utopians (a Socialistic colony on an island in the South Pacific) in order to steal the air-ship they are building, which he succeeds in doing.

FRANZ HARTOG—a German engineer, in league with Renault, who steals a very fast torpedo-boat destroyer from the Russian Government to levy blackmail on the Atlantic.

SIR HARRY MILTON—a wealthy young English nobleman, who by chance comes across the island of Utopia, in his yacht, the *Calypso*, and subsequently devotes the whole of his fortune to hunting down Renault and Hartog.

HERBERT WYNDHAM—a lieutenant in the British Navy who is travelling with Sir Harry for the benefit of his health, and who resigns his commission and couples his energies with those of Sir Harry in destroying the Anarchists, on account of the fact that he has been stabbed by Renault when the latter attempts to carry off Violet in the air-ship.

FREDERICK AUSTEN—the inventor of the air-ship, who shares its secret with Edward Adams, Dr. Edwards, and Ambrose Millar, three other Utopians.

FRANK MARKHAM—the young captain of the Utopian yacht, *Mermaid*.

VIOLET MILTON—Sir Harry's sister, and Lieutenant Wyndham's sweetheart, is permanently crippled by throwing herself out of the air-ship on which Renault has tried to carry her off.

DORA MERTON—a fair Utopian who has made an impression on Sir Harry.

LUCY SUMMERS—another fair Utopian.

Renault in the air-ship *Vengeur*, and Hartog in the torpedo-boat *Destroyer*, levy blackmail on the high seas. Just as they have annihilated a combined British, French, and Portuguese fleet sent to discover them, a Maxim aeroplane, the *Britannia*, comes on the scene, and is captured by the *Vengeur*. Those on it are put ashore, and one of the crew shoots at Renault and wounds him. A few weeks later Renault and Hartog set out for the Island of Utopia for the purpose of destroying its inhabitants, but find it deserted.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BACK TO LIFE.

IT will now be necessary, in order to preserve the continuity of the narrative, to go back to the evening of the disaster which caused such a dark and sudden cloud to fall upon the hitherto unclouded brightness of life in Utopia.

Before daybreak on the morning following the discovery of Lieutenant Wyndham lying wounded on the platform in the crater of Mount Orient, and the rescue of Violet from her perilous position on the top of the palm-tree, young Markham came galloping up to the crater on pony-back and had an interview with Adams and Mr. Austen, who were roused for the purpose from the brief slumber into which they had fallen after the distress and excitement of the previous night. So serious was the news that he brought that they were not long in seeing that he was perfectly justified in taking the step that he had done.

It will be remembered that he was intrusted with the amusement of the *Calypso's* crew during the holiday, and in the discharge of this duty he had taken several of them for a run round the reef in the *Mermaid*, after entertaining them for the greater part of the day, in order that those of them who wished might get a good general view of the island that they were so soon to leave. During this trip, and while the *Mermaid* was at the eastern extremity of the reef, and over twenty miles from the landing stages, he had seen the air-ship rise from the crater of Mount Orient and leave the island.

Bewildered as he had been by an apparition which, as he well knew, meant the disclosure of Utopia's most jealously guarded secret, he had not been long in coming to the conclusion that it could only be explained on the supposition of treason and desertion. Then, instantly, his thoughts had reverted to the *Nautilus*. If there had been anyone on the island capable of disclosing the secret of the air-ship and stealing her from the colony, was it not also reasonable to suppose that such a traitor would also try to deprive the colonists of the formidable sea-weapon which had so nearly approached completion.

It had taken all his own ingenuity and the authority of Mr. Topline to restrain or in any way satisfy the wondering curiosity of the *Calypso's* men with regard to the apparition of the air-ship. But this was of insignificant importance in comparison with the undefined, but very certain, fears that he entertained with regard to the safety of the *Nautilus*. Consequently, he put the *Mermaid's* head about, and astonished the sailors still further by rushing her back to the entrance to the lagoon in front of the settlement at a good thirty knots an hour.

Had taken several of them for a run round the reef in the "Mermaid.

It was dark by the time he got back to the dockyard, so, after giving the *Calypso's* men in charge of the sailing-master, he took the crew of the launch ashore, lighted the electric lamps, and set to work to make an examination, first of the hull of the *Nautilus*, and then of the dockyard itself.

For between three and four hours they searched in vain, and then, just as they were about to give up the search and leave the interior of the vessel, Markham's quick ear had caught a sound like the ticking of a clock, faint but regular, in the inmost recesses of the after part of the craft. He saw at once that this was a sound that boded danger, for there was nothing

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in connection with the work of building that could explain it, so they set to work again with redoubled energy and not a little anxiety, and at last discovered close hidden under one of the motor-fuel magazines, a battery and a little clockwork mechanism arranged like that of an alarum clock which, as after examination proved, would five minutes later have completed the circuit and sent a spark through the magazine, and produced an explosion which would have blown the after part of the *Nautilus* to fragments.

This was of course proof positive of treachery as ruthless as it had been cunning and secret, and gave ample confirmation of Markham's timely apprehensions. The battery was immediately disconnected, and then, leaving two of his companions to explore every other recess of the ship into which a human being could crawl, Markham took the rest and, after enlisting the assistance of Mr. Topline and the *Calypso's* men, proceeded to make a thorough and systematic examination of the whole dockyard.

This precaution, very necessary after what had been found in the hull of the *Nautilus*, occupied the searchers well through the night, but resulted in no further discovery, and from this fact it was rightly concluded that the traitor or traitors had had no time to plan or execute any further damage. As soon as he was satisfied of this, Markham, without waiting for daylight, had ridden up to Mount Orient and told his story to Adams and Mr. Austen, so that they might lose no time in taking any precautions that they might think necessary.

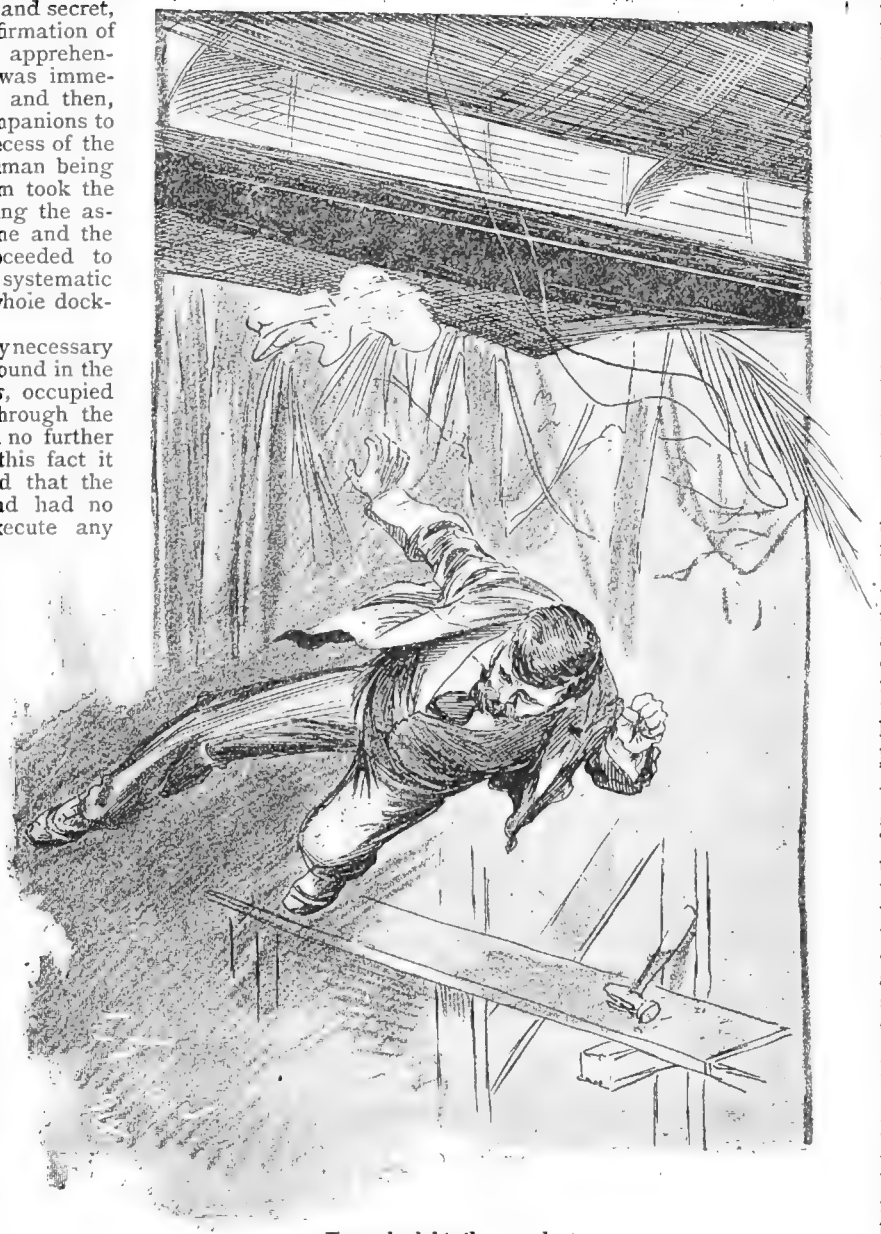
The first thing to be done was to hold a sort of council of war, and to this Sir Harry was invited in consideration of the offer he had made the evening before to devote his life and his fortune to avenging the misery and suffering that Renault had brought upon his sister and himself.

Naturally the first question that arose was whether Renault had acted entirely alone or whether he had had any accomplices on the island. As soon as the Lieutenant woke, which he did soon after sunrise, very weak but in the full possession of his faculties, he was able to answer this question in the negative so far as the carrying off of the air-ship was concerned.

He told them that on the previous afternoon he and Violet, when wandering alone, for reasons best known to themselves, in the valley between the two craters, had been unexpectedly accosted by Renault, who appeared to be in his pleasantest and politest mood, and he had led the conversation round to the *Nautilus* and the Lieutenant's offer to take her to sea.

Then he had told them that he had had a conversation on the subject with Adams and Mr. Austen, and that they had agreed with him that, as the Lieutenant had virtually decided to throw in his lot with the Utopians in their campaign against the *Destroyer*, there was no reason why a much greater secret than that of the existence of the *Nautilus* should be any longer withheld from him.

Wyndham had seen instantly what he was driving at, and when Renault at length, without giving any sign that he knew of their knowledge of the air-ship's existence, told him point blank that there was such a craft on the island, and offered to show it to them, there and then, in the crater of Mount Orient, his anxiety to see the wonderful ship at close quarters had got the better of his prudence, and he had accepted the offer without a thought of any ulterior design on Renault's part.



He was hurled to the ground.

He had proposed to go back and fetch Sir Harry, but Renault had objected to this on the ground that he was not yet authorised by his comrades to communicate the secret to Sir Harry, though he would take the personal responsibility of admitting Violet to the crater if she chose to come. To this he added that, as the afternoon was getting on, they would not have time to go back to the crater of Mount Plato and then go on and see the air-ship in daylight.

He said that he hadn't the slightest doubt but that Sir Harry would be invited to inspect the vessel before long, but there was no reason why the Lieutenant and Violet should not have a glimpse of it that evening—a sort of private view, as Renault had laughingly put it; and so, in their curiosity to see what was certainly the most wonderful thing on earth, they had given no further thought to the matter, but had simply followed Renault to the crater.

They had found the air-ship resting on her platform, and Renault had taken them on board, showed them the machinery, and explained the working. Then they had gone on deck, Renault having promised to run the ship round the inside of the crater, to give them an idea of the ease with

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She laid her uninjured hand in his.

which she could be managed. Just as they were waiting for her to rise from the platform, the Lieutenant had felt the stab of Renault's dagger in his back; then came a violent lurch, the air-ship's deck rose beneath his feet, and he was hurled to the ground, and remembered nothing more till he opened his eyes and found Adams and Sir Harry leaning over him.

Wyndham had scarcely finished his recital before Doctor Roberts came out of the hut in which Violet was lying to tell her brother the anxiously awaited news that she had regained consciousness at last, and was able to see him for a few minutes.

It would be easier to imagine than describe the mingled sorrow and rage that possessed the young Baronet when he went in and saw the awful change that Renault's villainous crime had produced in the girl, who only a few hours before had been full of life and strength and spirits, and had never known what a day's illness meant. Now she lay upon the luxurious couch that had been prepared for her, pallid, maimed, and crippled, barely able to move a limb, and so weak that she could only speak in a whisper.

She could not even hold out her hand to him as he approached her bedside, but her eyes brightened and her lips, now pale and shrunken in comparison with their rosy fulness of a few hours ago, moved in a faint languid smile.

Totally unable to speak for the moment, he stooped over her and kissed her, and as he did so she whispered:

"You see, I didn't kill myself after all; but I had to throw myself out—you know there was no other way. If I hadn't he would have taken me with him, and, of course, I would sooner have died twenty deaths than that. It was right, wasn't it?"

"Right?" said Sir Harry in a husky, half choked voice. "Yes, of course it was right, old girl. We were on the hill and saw you fall, and I knew you had thrown yourself out. It was your only way to escape, and you took it as your mother's daughter was bound to do. As for that scoundrel Renault——"

"Never mind him now, Harry," she whispered with a slight shake of her head. "Tell me, is Bertie—I mean Mr. Wyndham—alive? I've some dim recollection of Renault trying to stab him, or something, and throw him out of the ship. Did he do it?"

"Yes, I'm sorry to say he did—but, there, don't distress yourself about that. The wound was not fatal, though it was meant to be, and Roberts says there isn't the slightest danger if he's kept quiet; in fact, it's only a few minutes since he was asking how you were getting on. He's a lot more distressed about you, I can tell you, than he is about his own wound, though it's a pretty severe one."

Just the faintest perceptible flush rose into Violet's whitely transparent cheeks as he spoke. With an effort she laid her uninjured hand in his and said:

"Tell him I'm so glad—more glad than I can say—and, Harry, you must also tell him that he's not to think any more about what he said to me yesterday afternoon, because, although Doctor Roberts won't tell me, I believe that even if I don't die I shall never be able to walk again. There's something wrong with my back, and though, as you must know, I'm badly injured, I've scarcely any feeling at all in either of my legs, although Mrs. Merton told me that one of them is broken in two places."

"Nonsense, old girl, nonsense; you mustn't talk like that!" replied her brother with an assumed cheerfulness that he was far from feeling. "Of course, I know you've been terribly knocked about; but, you know, you've got the constitution of a young colt, the same as I have, and we shall pull you through all right now that you've once come round.

"Anyhow, I'm not going to tell Wyndham anything of the sort, and if I did he'd only laugh at me and tell me to mind my own business. You must settle that between yourselves when you're better. I don't believe in third persons interfering in these things. They always burn their fingers. Serve them jolly well right, too."

"Time's up, Milton!" said the doctor's voice outside the door before Violet could reply. "I said only five minutes, and you've had nearly ten. Out you come now, please. You can see her again after breakfast, but she's talked quite enough now."

Sir Harry knew his doctor too well to rebel, so, with another kiss and a gentle brotherly caress, he turned away from Violet's bedside, and catching the doctor outside the hut, put his arm through his and drew him away out of earshot.

"Now," he said, "Roberts, I suppose the worst of the danger's over, so you can tell me the worst there is to fear for the future."

"I can't tell you, my dear fellow, simply because I don't know myself. Thanks to young Edward's assistance, and the perfect nursing she has had, she has really made a wonderful improvement in the time. She'll live, there's not a doubt about that, I think; and as for the broken bones, why, she has the Milton constitution, and that means that there will be no trouble with them.

"We've reduced the fractures and got everything into place, and if it wasn't for that unhappy injury to her back I don't believe she'd even be lame, but I shouldn't be doing right if I didn't tell you that I don't at all like the look of the spinal injury. The best I can say is the back is not broken; but there's no doubt that the spinal cord is either crushed or strained.

"The lower part of her body is almost without feeling, though I fancy there is a slight increase of sensitiveness since the bones of the leg were set."

"And therefore," interrupted Sir Harry, "I suppose the worst is that she may be a cripple for life."

"I won't go so far as to say that," replied the doctor, shaking his head. "Of course, there is danger of it, it's no good disguising that, but it will be quite a week before I should feel justified in saying anything positive, you never exactly know where you are with spinal injuries. Sometimes the body literally dies from the place of lesion downwards, and sometimes the nerve-power gradually returns until only a little weakness is left.

"Your sister is young and strong and organically as sound as a bell, and in a year or two she may be running about the same as ever. On the other hand, it is possible that she may never be able to stand again or move without assistance. That's the best and the worst of it, and if there's anything in surgery you may rely upon us to make the best of it if it's physically possible.

"But I'll tell you this," he continued, stopping in his walk and facing round, "as soon as she is otherwise fit to be moved you ought to ship her off to London without losing a day, for the sooner that you get her under the care of some really good specialist the better hope there'll be of her recovery."

"Ah!" said Sir Harry. "Then that will just fit in with

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something else that I've been thinking about. How soon do you think she might be moved?"

"If nothing happens to throw her back she might be moved to her cabin on the *Calypso* in ten days or so."

"Very well," said Sir Harry. "I hope we shall be nearly ready to start by that time, but she won't go in the *Calypso*."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

LATER on in the day, when the whole colony had become aware of the loss that Utopia had sustained through Renault's daring and all too successful crime, a regular council of war was held in Lieutenant Wyndham's room.

As the Utopians were too sensible to believe that the more talk there is on a problem the more likelihood there is of arriving at a satisfactory solution the council consisted only of Mr. Austen, Adams, Ambrose Miller, the veteran mariner who had piloted the colonists to Utopia, Sir Harry, and, of course, the wounded Lieutenant, who had sufficiently recovered from the exhaustion consequent on his wound to be able to listen a good deal and talk a little.

As all had thought the question well out beforehand, and as no one had any desire save to find out the best course to pursue, there was very little talking done, and the most of it was done by Adams, who now, as on all important crises in the fortunes of Utopia, acted as the colonists' spokesman.

"I am afraid there is only one thing to be done," he said, in response to Mr. Austen's request that he should state his view of the case first. "I am afraid it will seem a very extreme view of the case, and, of course, if anyone can suggest another way out of the difficulty that offers the same chance of safety I shall be most happy to agree with them.

"So far as I can see, however, this treachery of Renault's has placed everybody in Utopia in a very serious position indeed. Of course, as Mr. Austen said last night, if the air-ship had only been armed and had her ammunition on board, there would be none of us left alive by this time. Renault would simply have hovered over us and killed us, and then he would have wrecked the settlement, so as to make sure that no one was left alive in possession of the secret of the motive power upon which, of course, everything depended.

"The only thing that we can do is to get out of Utopia before he returns."

"The discovery that Markham made in the *Nautilus* clearly proves that he intended to destroy the only vessel that could compete with the *Destroyer*. I am afraid there can be no doubt now but that Renault was an Anarchist in disguise, and that he came out with us solely for the purpose of getting hold of the secret that Mr. Austen gave us, and also, as events have proved, of stealing the air-ship when it was completed.

"No doubt he recognised Lieutenant Wyndham, and saw that he might be exposed at any moment, and that, to my mind, is why he took the air-ship for a trial trip that night that the Lieutenant and Sir Harry saw her over the hills, and also why he laid his plans hurriedly and got away with the air-ship instead of waiting, as I daresay he would have done, to try and corrupt enough members of the colony to help him to steal the *Nautilus* as well.

"With the personal violence and the dastardly crime that he was guilty of against Miss Milton and Lieutenant Wyndham, I do not think we have any concern at present——"

"No," said Sir Harry grimly. "We'll see about that later on when the day of reckoning comes; but we'll have to get on something like equal terms with the scoundrel before that."

"Yes," continued Adams. "So we can put that aside for the present. Now, obviously, Renault, having got possession of the air-ship, must do one of two things. Either he must content himself with the mischief that he can do after he has got her armed, and run the risk of our building another vessel swifter and more powerful than the one he has stolen, or else he will get her armed, come back here, and exterminate the colony in order to prevent our doing so. To my mind there is no choice between the two courses. He will certainly come back, and that as soon as he possibly can, therefore the only thing that we can do is to get out of Utopia before he returns."

When Adams ceased there was silence for two or three minutes. He had suggested the one course that held out any reasonable chance of safety, but it was also a course that meant the abandonment of the colony and all the bright hopes that had grown up round the venture, which had been overwhelmed with such sudden and unexpected disaster.

They knew that the Utopians had got to love their island paradise so dearly that it would be a terrible wrench for them to leave it, perhaps for ever, at a few days' notice; and so it was in a sadly serious tone that Mr. Austen took up the parable, and said:—

"Yes, I'm afraid there's nothing for it but that. The man who could do what Renault did yesterday is capable of any crime, and I feel certain that he would not scruple even to come back and slaughter every man, woman, and child in Utopia in order to make sure that he alone possessed the secret of the air-ship's motive power.

"To solve a problem like that of aerial navigation is to incur enormous responsibilities, and, honestly, I wish now that my poor Fred had died with the secret untold, for I can see nothing but a series of terrible calamities to the world as the outcome of it.

"If, as I'm afraid must be the case, Renault is really in league with the Anarchists who have possession of the *Destroyer*, it stands to reason that with the immense amount of money that they must have stolen already they will be able to build a large fleet of air-ships like the stolen one, and that will give them the power of working untold evil and destruction both on land and sea.

"Our duty, both to ourselves and the world, is now perfectly plain. Whatever sacrifice to our personal feelings, we must leave Utopia at the earliest possible moment. We must finish the work on the *Nautilus* and get her home to England to receive her equipment. That done, she must take the water in search of the *Destroyer* and not rest until she has found her and sent her to the bottom. Meanwhile—we must have at least a dozen air-ships."

"Make it a score at least," put in Sir Harry with a short laugh. "If they cost £40,000 apiece I'll see that the money's found for them."

"Very well," continued Mr. Austen, looking round at him with a smile. "A score let it be, and I can promise you that they shall be both faster and more powerful for destruction than the *Volante*, as we were going to have called her.

"But by the time we have built these—and with the utmost expedition they will take at least six months to complete, even if we build them simultaneously—we must expect that Renault and his accomplices, with an equal, if not greater, command of money will have been able to build a fleet possibly as strong as this, and therefore, I am afraid, we shall have to prepare ourselves not only to hunt the Anarchists out of the world but to literally fight such battles as have never been fought before.

"In short, I am afraid we must take it that, within the scope of the air-ship's powers, and as soon as she has been properly armed, Renault is virtual master of the world. It seems an extravagant term to use, and yet it must be granted that he is so; and we shall have to fight him for that mastery

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and take it away from him, or be destroyed in the attempt. There is nothing else for it, so far as I can see."

"No, there is nothing else; we must go," said Adams and Ambrose Miller, almost in a breath.

"That's it!" said Wyndham. "I must get well as soon as possible and take the *Nautilus* on the war-path, and then I'll either sink that *Destroyer* or get sunk by her; and as soon as you've got an air-ship for me to command, I'll get into the clouds and bring Monsieur Max to book. I wish to Heaven I was only ready to set out to-morrow."

"All in good time, Bertie, old man," said Sir Harry, rising to his feet with the others. "For the present, you pay all your attention to getting well. We'll do the rest, and when the day of battle comes, we'll see which of us shall make it hottest for those blackguards who have stolen a march on us and on the world at large."

The result of this brief conference was that that evening the colonists of Utopia assembled to the number of about a thousand souls on the beach beside the landing-stages, and heard from Adams' lips the gist of what had already been said in private. Everyone, of reasoning years, was compelled to admit that, mournful as such a step undoubtedly was, there was nothing for it but to forsake their beautiful southern home.

As long as Max Renault remained at liberty and in command of the air-ship there was no chance of safety for anyone in Utopia, and, therefore, they must abandon it. Some day, perhaps, when the peace of the world should be restored, they might return and continue the work that had been so rudely interrupted; but for the present they must forsake it.

But when Adams had done speaking, Sir Harry jumped upon the block of coral upon which he had been standing, and, in a few well-chosen hearty words, claimed the opportunity of making a return for the hospitality he and the company of the *Calypso* had received in Utopia by placing a little seaside town in Yorkshire, which he owned from the foundation to the chimney-pots, at the disposal of all who chose to go and live there as his guests until they found opportunities of settling down again into English homes of their own.

The invitation was accepted in the same spirit in which it was given, and with the next sunrise the Utopians set to work, with heavy hearts, but a settled conviction, that they were doing the best possible for themselves and their children to make all preparations for leaving the island at the earliest possible date.

Of course, the work on the *Nautilus* was pushed on with the utmost speed. Everyone who could give any assistance was set to work, and relays of workers wrought night and day on her and the *Calypso* with such hearty good will that on the tenth day of the new year the *Calypso* was floated out of the dry-dock and, in the presence of all the assembled colonists, Miss Dora put her dainty fingers on the electric button connected with certain mechanism which, set in motion, sent the *Nautilus* gliding down the well-greased ways of the slips, and despatched her with a graceful plunge into the waters of the basin.

By noon the following day everything was ready for the exodus, and the colonists embarked on the three vessels that were to take them back to England. The *Irene*, the two thousand-ton transport steamer which had originally brought them out, and the *Calypso*, which had also been fitted up as a transport, were to go by way of the Panama Canal, the *Irene* carrying the *Mermaid* as a tender. Ambrose Miller went in command of this portion of the expedition, and the *Nautilus*, in charge of Adams and Mr. Austen, and carrying Violet and the Lieutenant, Sir Harry, Doctor Roberts, and Mrs. Merton and Dora, who had undertaken the care of Violet between them, was to go round the Horn in order to avoid the undesirable notice she would be bound to receive in going through the Canal.

Though neither knew it, she actually passed the *Destroyer*, outward bound for Utopia, within ten miles of her, between the island of Trinidad and the coast of South America.

Travelling at an average speed of forty knots an hour the *Nautilus* covered the fifteen thousand odd miles between Utopia and the Straits of Dover in the miraculous time of seventeen days. So far the voyage was eventless. The strange low-lying craft, mastless save for a single signal pole, had crossed the world almost unobserved. The Lieutenant's wound had healed, and he was so much stronger that he took a regular watch every day in the conning-tower to familiarise himself with the working of the vessel, while Violet, though, of course, still almost helpless, had improved wonderfully in both health and general spirits.

They were running quietly and swiftly along through comparatively smooth grey sea, almost due east of the Admiralty Pier, at a distance of about eight miles, in the early night of the 27th, when the first interruption occurred. Without warning the long white blinding ray of a war-ship's searchlight flashed out of the gloom towards the land.

It fell for an instant on the platform of the swiftly-moving *Nautilus*, then came the short flat-toned bang of a blank cartridge, conveying an unmistakeable information to stop. The Lieutenant happened to be in the conning-tower with Adams at the moment. Adams, who was at the wheel, looked at him inquiringly and said:

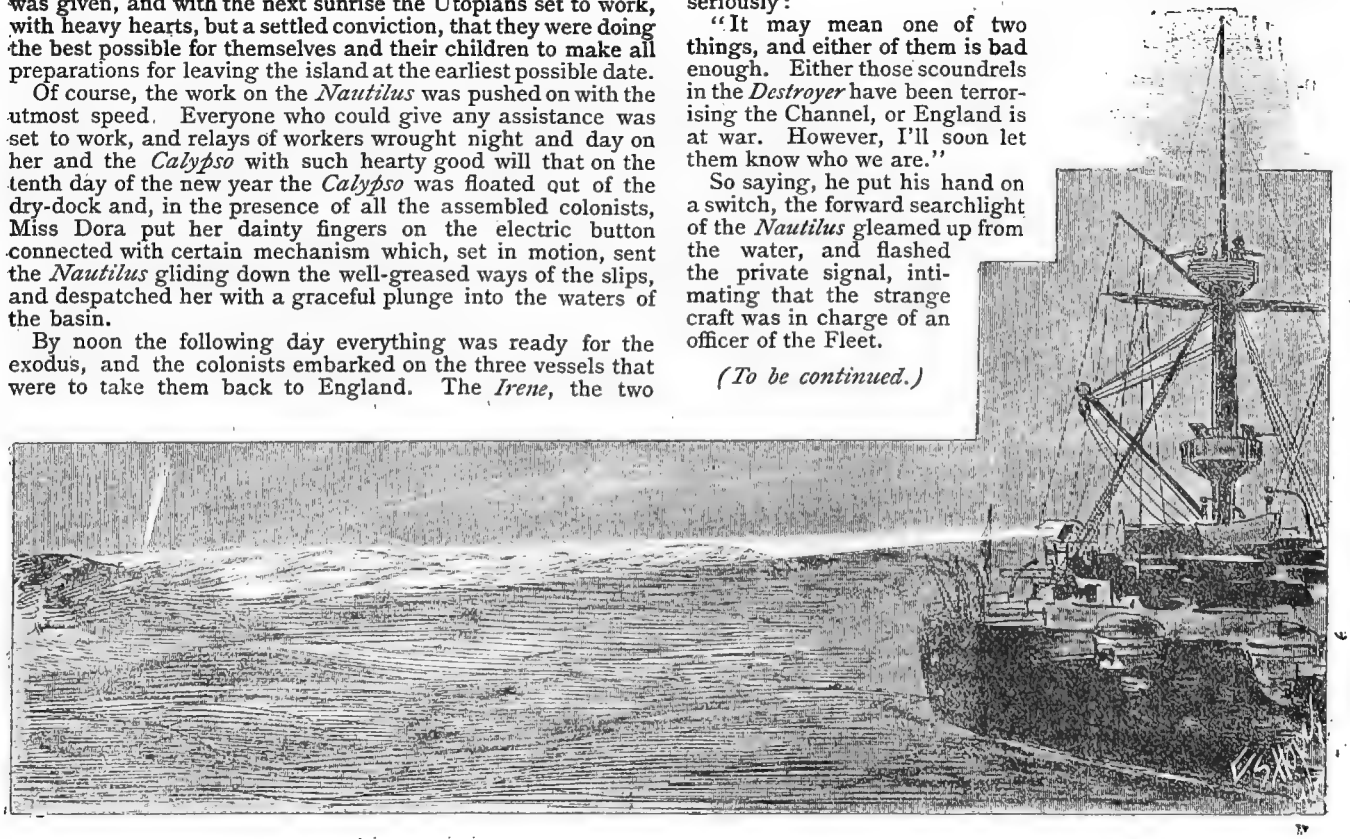
"What does that mean?"

Wyndham was silent for a moment, and then said very seriously:

"It may mean one of two things, and either of them is bad enough. Either those scoundrels in the *Destroyer* have been terrorising the Channel, or England is at war. However, I'll soon let them know who we are."

So saying, he put his hand on a switch, the forward searchlight of the *Nautilus* gleamed up from the water, and flashed the private signal, intimating that the strange craft was in charge of an officer of the Fleet.

(To be continued.)



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Miss Esperanza O'Shea.

'Twas just on the stroke of nine. The lower balcony of the Casino at Narragansett, the fashionable American watering-place, was crowded, and even on the broad stretch of stone pavement the chairs were so close that the passer-by had to pick his way, politely mindful of women's trains and men's feet. Outside the seawall the ocean lay long and level, part of it paled by moonlight, and here and there on its darker expanse specked with the small, steady lights of anchored yachts. The scene was picturesque—a black arch spanning a moonlit roadway, a gate-tower, dark against the sky, with a round, bright moon shining over its shoulder, a glimmering of white waves seething about broken rocks. From the corner of the balcony, where the musicians sat, floated the strains of Wolfram's "Song to the Evening Star," with its undertone of ineffable, piercing sadness.

It was just at this propitious moment that the crowd at the far end of the balcony became aware that the crowd at the end near the main entrance were enjoying a sensation. There was a rustle of crushed silk as the women moved in their chairs, a universal turning of heads, a raising of girls' lorgnettes, an adjusting of men's glasses, a murmurous intermingling of queries, and then a running fire of comment, not too carefully suppressed—"Well, did you ever! Who are they, for pity's sake? Has she ever been here before? Where are they from? Did you say it was an actress?" And all the heads slowly revolved on the craned necks as all the eyes turned to follow three new arrivals walk down the balcony.

Miss Esperanza O'Shea had often been stared at, but never to this extent. As a Californian, a beauty, and an heiress, she had known what it was to be looked upon with curiosity, admiration, and envy. But she had never before left her native State, hence she had never been subjected to the broad, unwinking stare of the cultured East. Nevertheless she bore it with the impassive *aplomb* of one born and bred in its fierce, bright glare, and, at the head of the family, walked slowly down the long verandah, the little *cortège* trotting at her heels, as it had done, figuratively speaking, ever since she had been old enough to walk at all.

Miss O'Shea invariably led her family in all things. She had done so since her tenderest years. Her papa, a big, florid, grizzled man, in a high grey hat and a loosely hanging grey suit, always obeyed Esperanza. As to her mamma, she was a Mexican, and though she had lived for twenty years under the shadow of the American flag, she had never been able to master the intricacies of the English language, and could, therefore, hardly be expected to guide the steps of her extremely self-confident daughter.

Close upon the musicians Miss O'Shea paused, her darkly circled eyes falling upon three vacant chairs. She indicated them with the gesture of one used to command, and her obedient parents silently seated themselves. Mr. O'Shea took off his hat, ran a fat, short-fingered hand through his grizzled hair, and inhaled the sea-air, then turned his eyes inward and made no sound.

Mrs. O'Shea, whom the lights revealed to be a dark, fat, waistless, formless lady, with ink-black hair and a moustache, the possession of which would have made the heart of an undergraduate sing, indulged in soft Spanish mutterings, and went to sleep with the promptitude of one who knows what is expected of a well-trained Spanish mother. Miss O'Shea alone remained alert and watchful, and gave the crowd stare for stare.

It was not surprising that a crowd should stare at this brilliant young lady. She was made up with an open and unblushing frankness that bespoke ignorance of the popular prejudice against this form of decoration. Rice powder was thick on the bridge of her nose. There was pink on her cheeks, and red on her lips.

Her hair, curled down to her eyebrows, was bleached a bright bronze-red; she was tall and well-formed, with square, broad shoulders and a good figure. Her foot, peeping from the hem of her skirt in a white kid slipper worked with gold, was by no means small. Neither were her hands, but they were white as milk, beautifully shaped and covered with superb rings. As for her dress, it was an indescribably gorgeous creation of white and gold, with a bodice of dead white *suède* braided from neck to waistline in gold arabesques. But neither paint, powder, nor bad dressing could hide that she was handsome and young.

"Where on earth has she come from?" breathed the crowd, with the wide eyes of lively amazement.

Had this query been put directly to Miss O'Shea, she would have answered with unruffled good humour that she had come straight from California for the purpose of "having a good time."

After a serious perusal of the papers, Esperanza O'Shea had come to the conclusion that Narragansett was the best place to go in pursuit of the vaguely specified good time. Moreover, it appeared to be a place where a dazzling wardrobe would meet with an intelligent appreciation. At breakfast one morning Esperanza announced her intention of spending the summer there.

"All right, Espy," said Mr. O'Shea, "I'll telegraph for rooms to-day."

"Si, si," murmured the Señora O'Shea, raising the heavy lids that once shaded the finest eyes in Mexico, and casting a sleepy glance at her daughter; "yez, cettanly, of cos," and then once more she relapsed into smiling somnolence.

The wardrobe did its work at Narragansett, if its work was to make its wearer stared at, talked about, and grudgingly admired. It was certainly a remarkable one. In a place of remarkable wardrobes it made its mark, had its own niche with the other wardrobes, and its share in the day's talk. Miss O'Shea wore it with an impassive front, and greatly enjoyed the sensation it created. As a wardrobe to be stared at it was a brilliant success. On its own ground none of the other wardrobes could compare with it. Arrayed in one of its masterpieces no one was as conspicuous, no one as gorgeous, no one, truth to tell, despite the powder and the paint, was as handsome as Esperanza O'Shea.

But there is admiration and admiration. The unsophisticated Esperanza had not grasped this fact. That the glances and stares of one of the most ill-bred crowds in the country were not all admiring, did not penetrate her simple mind for some time. That people were slow in extending the right hand of fellowship to her, she did feel with a slowly dawning, hurt surprise. It never occurred to her that any one could possibly object to making the acquaintance of a young lady because she had red-gold hair when Nature meant her to have dark brown, or because she plastered her lips with a crimson glue for all the world to see.

But Eastern folks were not very friendly. She announced this with the customary candour of the Californian to a lady who sat next her at table. The lady said: "No, they are not expansive," and then smiled and drifted out of the dining-room, and afterward proved to be one of the least expansive of the people toward whom Esperanza made friendly overtures.

Yes, they were very stiff. She sat in the Casino every evening with her papa and her mamma, and nobody came to talk to her. Up in the tower, with its stone supports black

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against the horizon, the red electric lights showed friendly, cheerful, merry people sitting in groups, and sometimes sipping cool drinks at the little round tables. Their laughter floated down and mingled with the faint washing of the waves on the rocks. They undoubtedly were having a good time.

So were the people on the balcony and the paved terrace, drawn together in little gay, chattering parties, from which the breeze bore scraps of sentences and the light, high laughter of women. Esperanza envied them with the pent-up intensity of her eighteen years. Silent, between her silent parents, she looked at the gay groups round her with her eyes full of a childish and pathetically candid envy.

"Don't seem to me, Espy," said her father suddenly, "as if you were having such a rattling good time."

"Well, not exactly, popper," she said, heaving up a great sigh from the bottom of her pensively covetous heart, "but may be I'll get there later."

The next evening the O'Shea party resolved to try a change, and ascended to the tower. It was even gayer than usual. Groups sat about at the round table, sipping chilled liquids in tall tumblers. A long steam yacht, which had run into port a few hours before, was now only vaguely distinguishable, but its lights pierced the darkness, moving with the moving swells. Its blue-coated, white-trousered yachtmen roamed the Casino, occasionally stopping to greet friends.

At ten o'clock the silent O'Sheas picked up their wraps and departed for their hotel, which was close by the Casino. But as they emerged from that building Esperanza, who had been struggling with her long cloak of white silk, discovered that she had carried away the cape of the lady who had been next her. She remembered having seen it on the chair beside her and recollected throwing her own cloak over it. Calling to her parents to go on, that she had forgotten something and would join them presently, she hurried back to the tower. But the lady and her friends had already gone.

Not finding its owner, Esperanza gave the cape to one of the waiters loitering about, then slowly retraced her steps toward the corridor. There were only a few people now left in the tower and the gallery, and these were mostly couples who had tucked themselves away in corners, and were enjoying murmured conversation. Miss O'Shea, smiling to herself, looked over the road to see if she could catch a glimpse of her parents, then trailed her long skirts of pale blue brocade along the passage to the stair-head.

As she reached this, a quick step on the verandah outside announced the approach of a man. Miss O'Shea dreamily speculated that he must have seen her as she walked down the gallery. With her fingers extended for the balustrade, she turned and saw him enter. He was a tall, handsome man, in the dark blue coat, white duck trousers, and blue-peaked cap of a yachtsman. He wore eyeglasses, and looked somewhere in the vicinity of thirty. His face, as he stood there looking at her, left upon her memory a lasting impression.

Then, as she extended her foot for the first step, he took off his hat and said, smiling:

"How do you do? Isn't it a lovely evening?"

She was startled and made vaguely uncomfortable by this unexpected address. Looking at him in frank astonishment she murmured a hesitating "Yes, lovely," and was about to continue her descent when he drew a step closer and said:

"Don't go back yet. Let's go into the tower and have an *absinthe frappé*."

Miss O'Shea stopped on the step and made no further attempt to descend. The words themselves made little impression on her. In the manner of the man lay the sting. Even Miss O'Shea, with her limited range of experience and her beautiful belief in mankind's invariably chivalrous intention, felt it.

And then she forgot the little—the very little—training she had ever received, forgot what Dr. Watts tells us of our hands not being made for the purpose of tearing out each other's eyes, forgot that the only weapon society allows a lady is her tongue, forgot what society says a lady is indeed, and what it maintains she should always be, and a great wave of fury swept over her. The fiery blood of Indian and Spaniard rushed into her face, the fierce spirit of her Castilian forefathers, who had conquered a world with Cortez, burst once more into life. With the closed fan in her hand she struck the smiling face a stinging blow. The fan-sticks snapped, the bronzed skin beneath them crimsoned. Smothering a furious ejaculation the man threw a hand up over his cheek and eye, and Miss O'Shea, panting and darkly flushed, swept down the stairs.

Then as she hurriedly descended, he, smarting with pain, his anger surging, hurled himself on the balustrade and looked over at her. All he saw was the top of her red-gold head, the wavering pulse of diamonds that trembled through her hair, the long sweep of her pale-blue dress, the ivory nape of her neck where the pearl necklace fastened with a sapphire clasp. The next moment she had passed out of sight, and he heard her rapid, decisive step on the balcony below.

He turned back, intending to watch her from the upper verandah, but in the doorway met a friend who accosted him with a jocular:

"Hullo, Beverwyk, what have you been running into?"

"Oh! I turned suddenly to look at that woman just go down the stairs and ran into that door; thought both doors were open—hurts like the dickens," returned the other glibly.

And arm-in-arm they passed down the verandah, talking together and laughing.

When Miss O'Shea got back to her hotel her breath had regained its usual evenness; her colour had gone down, but her eyes were brilliant under their lowered lids. Her father sat in the darkened sitting-room in his shirt-sleeves with his high hat on—his habitual costume when at ease in the house. When she came in, tossed her cloak on a chair, and stood silently pulling off her gloves, he regarded her for a moment or two, then said, as if the idea had just struck him:

"Where've you been all this time?"

"Oh, I just went back to return that lady's cape. I gave it to a waiter. It was all right." She tore off her gloves, and stretched and bent her plump fingers, turning round her rings.

"Look here, pop," she said, twisting the "marquise" on her little finger back into place, "I guess we'd better leave this place."

"Well, I think so, too," said the old man mildly. "Guess you don't like it much, Espy?"

"I don't belong here," she said with a sort of rough shyness. "I'm different."

The old man extended his hand and drew her up to him.

"You'll do," he said, fondly patting the velvety hand.

"May be I will for you," she answered with the same air of dogged embarrassment, "but I'm too different. It's not comfortable."

Whether Mr. O'Shea understood or not he queried no further. He patted the smooth hand in silence, then he said:

"Well—what do you want to do?"

"I want to go to Europe for a long time—a year. I want to know things. I don't want to be so different."

"Well, now, Espy," said the old man deprecatingly; then, as two soft arms went round his neck, he added: "But you can go if you want."

Two weeks later the O'Shea family sailed from New York on the *Umbria*.

Once arrived in the effete monarchies Miss Esperanza O'Shea went seriously, if a little blindly, to work to reconstruct herself. She went to school in Paris and stayed there all the winter, studying hard. Her companions showed no surprise at her presence. They had heard that she was an American from California, which in the effete monarchies explains many things.

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In their refining society Miss O'Shea was gradually restored to her original self. Her red-gold locks went through as many changes as the dying dolphin, but at length arrived safely on the homeward path to the deep dark-brown of nature. She put away all the little pots of red and white that had made her dressing-table look like that of an old belle who dies hard. A very demure phœnix began to rise from the ashes of the once gorgeous Esperanza O'Shea.

With the native shrewdness of the women of the West who make their own positions and fight their own fortunes she was quick to see and adopt the style and manners of the young girls about her. By the spring the elaborate beauty who had created a sensation at the Narragansett Casino had passed from phase to phase of subduing process, and, compared to her old self, was as a wren to a peacock.

Instead of looking like a woman of thirty she now looked what she was—a girl of twenty—a tall, ivory-pale, velvet-eyed girl, with thick coils of smooth uncurled, dark hair, and a stately carriage, such as romance-writers are fond of ascribing to princesses. The Parisians thought her very foreign and picturesque. She looked like Doña Sol or Elvira. All she wanted was the dusky droop of the mantilla shadowing the warm pallor of her cheeks, a black curl on her temple, a red rose in her hair.

The elaborating process did not finish at Paris. Miss O'Shea took her family and a governess travelling. They "did" Europe, with couriers and libraries of books of travel, and a governess, who in some embarrassment called herself "a companion." They studied art in Italy, and music in Germany. The governess was almost worked to death, but the pupil, insatiable in her desire to be as ornate as the young person of any place or any country, would permit no respite. They met a good many people, too. Miss O'Shea began to be spoken of as the great beauty and heiress of the American colonies of different capitals.

A tall, ivory pale, velvet-eyed girl.

French noblemen whom she had never seen wrote to her offering her their hearts, hands, and coronets. English noblemen followed her about, meditating proposals, but German noblemen generally proposed to her on the first meeting. Before her return to New York, after a three years' absence, her coming was heralded with a flourish of newspaper trumpets that crowded into small type in an obscure corner the arrival of Herr Glumberg, the most eminent of German anthropologists, who crossed in the same steamer.

As the immortal Begum would say, the O'Sheas were "took up" in New York. That metropolis is always glad to know any one who has met with the approval of the effete monarchies. It had heard of the foreign nobleman, and it immediately proceeded to light its taper before the same shrine.

Miss O'Shea was pronounced a very wonderful young woman, perfect in her style, *distinguée*, singularly simple, sweet and fine and true. Such a dazzling creature had never before come out of the West. She knew everything, spoke half a dozen languages, played on musical instruments—rumour wasn't sure that she didn't play two at the same time Her parents came in for a little of the general approbation.

Society characterised Mrs. O'Shea as a most cultivated woman, and when she fell asleep before its eyes said that "her manner was marked by a truly Southern repose."

But the crown of the O'Sheas' glory was reached when it became evident that Beverwyk Van Duyvil had succumbed to the charms of the beautiful Esperanza. To understand what this really meant one ought to know that Beverwyk Dan Duyvil was the last of the Dan Duyvils—that illustrious family which, tradition says, was one of the few families that before settling in New Amsterdam enjoyed distinction in the mother country. The Van Duyvils had never been butchers or bakers, or even shoemakers. There was, therefore, nothing left for them to be but gentlemen of leisure or governors.

The last representative of this honourable race was very rich, very much of a person, not a cotillon-leader or a ball-organiser, but a man of parts and position. And now he sighed at a pair of Californian feet that had once run brown and bare on the dusty by-roads about Merced.

Even old O'Shea was flattered in his pride. His sturdy democratic heart could not subdue a throb of vanity when he thought that the sole survivor of the house of O'Shea—recently discovered to be descended from the kings of Waterford—should mate with the last representative of the house of Van Duyvil. The only person who remained haughtily indifferent was the young lady herself. She was distant and cold to her suitor, rarely spoke of him, made excuses not to see him, was out when he called. It would not have been strange if Beverwyk Van Duyvil had felt discouraged by the attitude of his lady fair.

But to be a Van Duyvil means more things than to be merely great and illustrious. It means to possess a self-confidence that earthquakes cannot shake. That the young lady was cold and unresponsive proved to Beverwyk Van Duyvil that she was a trifle more original than the scions of the first families whom he had heretofore honoured with his regard. It was meet that a future Van Duyvil should hold herself high.

When he finally asked her to marry him this most difficult task was accomplished with truly graceful tact and admirable manner. Beverwyk Dan Duyvil proposed, as he did everything else, with perfectly finished grace. It must be admitted that, of the two, the descendant of the lordly Dutchman was more self-possessed and agreeable than the descendant of the Milesian kings.

Miss Esperanza O'Shea received the flattering offer in ungracious and frowning silence which may be peculiar to kings but is not accounted charming in beautiful young Californians. Then, as Van Duyvil attempted to take her hand and press it gently between his own, she abruptly withdrew the member, and fixing on him a pair of darkly angry eyes, said: "I will send you your answer to-morrow." And without waiting for him to reply, she rose and walked away, not looking back, leaving him to follow with his eyes her graceful figure as she passed down the long room, and to sit silent, absently drawing his gloves through his hand in pleasing meditations.

The next afternoon, when Beverwyk arrived from down-town in his apartments, he found a package awaiting him. It was long and narrow, wrapped in paper, and directed in the small round hand of Miss O'Shea. He opened it, puzzled. From the unrolled paper dropped a fan of pale blue-painted gauze, with four of its sticks snapped in two. Round the broken sticks was twisted a piece of paper, on which was written:

"For the second time Mr. Van Duyvil has made a mistake.
ESPERANZA O'SHEA."

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THE MAIDEN'S THREE GIFTS

A POOR woman gave birth to a daughter.

On the third day after its birth three fairies came to visit the mother, and seeing how beautiful the infant was, they promised it three good gifts.

The first fairy, touching it with her golden wand, said: "The day that she is twelve years old a rose shall fall from her mouth every time she laughs."

The second fairy then touched it with her golden wand: "The day that she is twelve years old," she said, "every time she weeps pearls shall fall from her eyes."

And lastly the third fairy with her golden wand also touched her, saying: "Before your eighteenth year has passed a prince shall marry you, and you shall become a princess."

The mother listened to all these promises and her heart rejoiced exceedingly. She was very poor, but she brought up her daughter as well as she could until she was twelve years of age. The evening of the day on which she completed her twelfth year the girl laughed right out with joy at something which her mother had said and immediately the first rose fell from her lips, and when the mother saw it she remembered all the fairies had promised, and her motherly heart rejoiced, for she said, "If one promise be fulfilled the others will surely follow in their turn."

It was winter, and the queen was going to give a great ball at the palace. She had a beautiful gown and it was rose colour, so she wanted to have some real roses on her head and at her breast to wear with it. She therefore ordered the royal gardener to bring her some, but he said that so much snow had fallen that all the roses were spoilt, and that he could not find even one. The queen was very angry at this, and told him straightway that she did not believe him, but that he preferred to leave them to perish in the royal garden, adding that she should go and seek for herself another gardener and dismiss him forthwith.

The poor gardener sighed upon hearing this, and went to look at every garden far and near to see if he could possibly find any roses, but he found none. In the course of his wanderings he happened to pass by the cottage in which dwelt the poor woman and her daughter.

The gardener was so bewildered by his anxiety that he did not see where he was going, and never observing a stone that was lying before the cottage, he stumbled over it and fell down. There was something comical in the way in which he fell, for he did not hurt himself, but his *fez* rolled off his head into the mud.

The girl, who was looking out of the window, could not help laughing when she saw the gardener fall, and down dropped a rose from her mouth and fell into the road right in front of the gardener. When she saw what had occurred she felt a little bit ashamed, and drew back to hide herself, but the gardener, as soon as he saw it, never stayed to pick up his *fez* but ran quickly to seize the rose. He could not believe his own eyes. How did it come there? Perhaps it was done by magic. Anyhow, it was a real and beautiful rose, and smelt better than those of April; but one rose was of no use to the queen. He must have ten, and where could he find the others?

So without any more ado he knocked at the door, which the mother immediately opened, "Well, my good man, what do you want?" she asked.

And then he told her all about the queen and the ball, and how he had suddenly found a rose outside her house, when he was almost in a state of despair. After the mother heard all this, she said: "Take this one then, and go to the queen, and tell her that there is only one rose tree which is able to produce such roses, and that on the day of the ball I will cut some and take her as many as she desires."

When the day of the ball arrived the queen ordered the gardener to fetch both the woman and the roses, and about noon the mother arrived at the palace, bringing with her a covered basket, and, after she had saluted her Majesty, she uncovered it and presented the roses to her.

"Madam," said the queen, "I have a favour to ask of you. Sell me the rose tree which bears these roses."

But the mother answered, "Much honoured queen, I cannot do this with my rose tree. I cannot sell it. Only one thing I can do if you are willing. You have a prince, and I will bestow it on the prince, to have it for his own, and to keep it honoured and loved as if it were a living princess."

"Your wish shall be granted, madam, so that we may only have the rose tree in the palace; and you may come with it, and live near us also."

"May God grant you a long life, my queen. Come by yourself to-morrow, and take away the rose tree from my house."

The next morning the queen lost no time before going to secure the rose tree. When the prince heard of the agreement which his mother had made with the woman he jumped for joy and got a golden vase ready in the palace in which the rose tree was to be planted. The queen and prince went together in a golden chariot and, stopping before the humble cottage where the mother dwelt, they alighted.

As soon as the mother and daughter went out to receive the royal visitors the daughter, as she bent down to kiss the queen's hand, smiled merely from a grateful feeling, and a rose fell from her mouth.

At one and the same moment the queen and the prince understood it all. The queen became very angry because she remembered directly that she was bound by her oath to receive the girl as a daughter-in-law. She turned, however, to look at her again, when she saw that the girl was really so very beautiful and so very good that without a moment's longer reserve she threw her arms around her, saying aloud as she kissed her, "You are a poor girl no longer, but a princess henceforth. You shall come and live in our palace, you and your mother also."

"Now that it has all turned out exactly as you wished it," she added, addressing the mother, "tell me, lady co-mother-in-law, how your daughter acquired so great a charm as to shower roses from her mouth whenever she laughs."

The mother immediately told her all about the fairies and their three promised gifts to her daughter when she was an infant and how the first and the last promise had both come true.

"The second has not taken place, then," said the queen with some curiosity; "how was it that did not happen? for poor as you were, had pearls fallen from her eyes you could have sold them."

"That did not happen," answered the mother, "because I never made her weep. I sought only to see her happy and smiling, preferring to live poor in my daughter's gladness than to become rich by her grief."

When the queen heard these words she embraced and kissed her, saying, "You have indeed been a good mother, and it is an honour to a queen to become connected with you."

The girl, who had listened to all that her mother had said, was now so overcome by emotion that her eyes filled with tears and two large pearls rolled down. The prince stooped to pick them up.

"These are not tears of sorrow," he said; "they are tears of joy. I will take them and have them made into earrings and you shall wear them on the day on which you become my princess."

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WHAT AILED THE FIRE?

THE cool weather of autumn was come. After sunset there was really a frosty feel in the air. "We had better make up a little fire in the grate to-night," said my wife; "it's chilly sitting here without." "Yes," said I, "let us make the fire now." So I went at it, putting on plenty of dry wood and coals enough to light up nicely. But it was no use—the fire wouldn't burn. It would just spit and sputter and make a smudge fit to put your eyes out. We gave it up and went to bed early. Next morning I investigated and found the chimney nearly closed with swallows' nests. The wood was right, the coal was right, but the draught wasn't. I evicted the swallows, and cleared away their habitations. Result: Next night a good fire and pure air. Dear me! such a simple thing is hardly worth telling, is it?

Perhaps not, but here is our friend, Mr. Joseph Smith, who talks like this: "*I had no relish for my meals*," he says. Now, why not? The meals were good, he had time to eat, he needed the refreshment food would give him; but all the same he hesitated as though meat, potatoes, tarts, &c., were things to look out for and guard against. This was not his habit; not at all. He and his meals had always been on the best of terms until September, 1891. Then they fell out. He speaks of it thus: "I took a chill in harvest time, and seemed to lose all power and energy. I couldn't imagine what had come over me. There was a bad, coppery taste in my mouth, and what little I did eat gave me pain at the chest and side. I was constantly spitting up a sour fluid and belching wind. After a while my breath got short, and I was so weak I could scarcely walk across the floor. In a few weeks I lost nearly two stone in weight. I consulted two doctors, but was none the better for the medicines they gave me. They didn't appear to know what ailed me. One of them said, 'The sooner you get into the infirmary the better.'

"On the strength of this I obtained a recommendation, and in November, 1891, I went to the Lincoln Infirmary. After being there seven weeks I returned home as bad as ever. But I am glad I went to Lincoln, nevertheless, for there I met a friend who advised me to give up taking drugs and doctors' stuff and, instead, to try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I got a bottle from Mr. Sharp, the chemist, and in a few days I had some appetite, my food agreed with me, and my breathing was easier. After that I went straight ahead, gradually getting stronger and stronger, and all the credit of my recovery is due to Siegel's Syrup. If you think fit you are at liberty to publish the facts in my case. Yours truly, (Signed) Joseph Smith, Rectory Street, Epworth, *via* Doncaster, December 23rd, 1892."

Mr. Sharp, the chemist named by Mr. Smith, remembers the latter's illness, and can vouch for the accuracy of his statement.

After having read our friend's plain and clearhcaded letter, we need hardly ask again why he had no relish for his meals. The reason is the stomach, afflicted with indigestion and dyspepsia, sore, torpid, and inflamed, was in no condition to handle food. The more it received, the worse off it was. It was like our fire under the choked chimney—the more coals the more smoke and smudge. So the oppressed stomach sent up word to the palate, "Don't give me any more material to work on; I can do nothing with it." On this the palate spoiled its owner's appetite (in his own interest), and waited for help.

The help came, finally, in the form of Mother's Seigel's Curative Syrup, which put the digestive machine in order again. Then the stomach telegraphed to the palate, "Turn on the appetite and send down the food; am now in shape to attend to business."

As to Mr. Smith's chill in the harvest field, that came because his blood was poisoned by the indigestion, not from cold. People often freeze to death without a sign of what we call a "chill." Fires don't go out because the weather is cold.

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TITULAR EVIDENCE AND ADVICE.

"The Anchor's Weighed" in the "Bay of Biscay" with a supply of ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Skipper" and "The Midshipmite" would be "Anchored" but for ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Simon the Cellarer," after "Drinking," takes ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Annie Laurie" felt annoyed "When Other Lips" consumed her ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Village Blacksmith" advised "Daisy Bell" to use ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Old English Gentleman" gave each of "The Hundred Pipers" a box of ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"All's Well" when you have a supply of ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"I know a Bank" whereon "My Pretty Jane" sat and took two ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Old Folks at Home" have "Golden Days," thanks to ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"In Happy Moments," "After the Ball," do not forget to take ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Maggie Murphy's Home," "On the Banks of Allan Water," always possesses a box of ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Last Rose of Summer" will fade from your cheeks without ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"John Peel" was made "Ruddier than the Cherry" by using ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Vicar of Bray" and "Father O'Flynn" could do, could do with ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"A Boy's best Friend is his Mother" when she doses him with ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"We may be happy yet" by simply taking a few of ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Should he upbraid," then give him ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Holy Friar" and "The Monks of Old" all chant the praises of ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Children's Home" is not "Home, sweet Home" without ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Life let us cherish," and this can best be done by using ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"The Minstrel Boy" sang "Come into the Garden, Maud," and take ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"There's nae luck about the hoose" without ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Robin Adair" was completely "Stranded" until he took ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
"Has Sorrow thy young days shaded?" then have recourse to ... ... BEECHAM'S PILLS.
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